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ABSTRACT

This unit of study explores the experiences and the role of women during World War II. The unit can serve as an introduction or supplement to commonly taught topics such as Nazism in Germany, the Holocaust, the "home front," the USSR's Great Patriotic War, and the struggle between Nationalists and Communists in China. It begins with an overview and rationale, followed by the unit context and correlation to the National History Standards. Five unit objectives are outlined, lesson plans and introductory activities are described, and a table of relevant dates is provided. The unit then presents four lessons: (1) "The Impact on Women"; (2) "The Influence of Both the War and Cultural Views about Women on American Women's Employment"; (3) "Conditions That Militated for and against Gender Equality in the Soviet Combat Forces"; and (4) "The Importance of Social Context in Women's Attitudes about and Participation in the War: China as a Case Study." Each lesson contains teacher background materials, class activities, and primary sources. An 18-item bibliography concludes the unit. (Contains 18 references.) (BT)

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WOMEN AT THE HEART OF WAR

BY DR. ANNE CHAPMAN

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
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I. UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

There were women in World War II who had guns, and used them. Women fought beside men in resistance movements against the enemy in occupied areas of Europe and Asia. In the U.S.S.R. alone among the countries at war, women took part in combat as part of the Armed Forces. In the United Kingdom, service women in non-combat roles made up 10 percent of the military. In the U.S. they made up 2 percent. In Germany, women did not have military status but served as auxiliaries (called *Hilferinnen* or "helpers") attached to the various services. In China, they fought in the Communist Army and with partisan forces.

Even so, women untouched by combat, unthreatened by physical violence, neither carriers nor targets of guns, were affected by the war in many ways. Most immediately, they were affected by the men who fought: being afraid for them (and of them); supporting them by word and deed; producing the supplies they needed; opposing them, missing them, healing them, and mourning them.

Women also had to change their lives in many ways, small and not so small. Shortages of food, clothing, and much else obliged French women to raise rabbits on apartment balconies, Japanese to cook without rice, Italians to go without oil, those in famine areas to eat cats and rats, and all to "use it up, wear it out, make it do, or do without." Millions of women took paid jobs for the first time. Women wearing pants, first on and then even off the job, became accepted fashion in European countries and the U.S., where the number of households with domestic servants fell by 50 percent. Women had to learn to think and act in new ways; look after themselves and their children on their own; deal with unfamiliar situations; and make critical decisions that had ripple effects beyond their own lives. They made a difference in the war; and the war made a difference to them.

II UNIT CONTEXT

This unit deals with the experience of women in World War II and can serve as an introduction or supplement to commonly taught topics such as Nazism in Germany, the Holocaust, the "home front," the U.S.S.R.'s Great Patriotic War, and the struggle between Nationalists and Communists in China.

III. CORRELATION TO THE NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

Women at the Heart of War" provides teaching materials that address the *National Standards for History*, Basic Edition (National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA, 1996), World History, Era 8, "A Half-Century of Crisis and Achievement, 1900-1945." Lessons specifically address Standard 4B on the global scope, outcome, and human costs of the war. This unit also correlates to the standards for United States History, Era 8, "The Great Depression and World War II, 1929-1945." Lessons specifically address Standard 3C on the effects of World War II at home.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze women's participation in World War II in a comparative, world-historical framework, assessing women's impact on the war, and the war's impact on women in Germany, the U.S., the U.S.S.R., and China.

2. To examine how ideas about women's "nature" and their "proper roles" affected their experiences in the war; and also to what extent and in what ways the war affected those ideas.

3. To develop empathy for the moral and ethical dilemmas of special significance in the historical circumstances of a particular era.

4. To study and compare various kinds of historical evidence, analyzing it for reliability and significance.

5 To model case studies of ways to integrate women's history into traditionally studied topics.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. The impact on women of Hitler's ideology of gender and race

2. The influence of both the war and cultural views about women on American women's employment

3. Conditions that militated for and against gender equality in the Soviet combat forces

4. The importance of social context in women's attitudes about and participation in the war: China as a case study

VI. INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to brainstorm, listing answers on the blackboard: In what ways were women affected by World War II? In what ways did women actively participate in the war? What circumstances would have made a difference in how women were affected and how they participated? (Some possibilities to look for: country in which women lived, enemy-occupied territory or not, class, race, religion, ideology, age, marital status, motherhood.)

2. For each item listed on the board, ask for a show of hands about whether the effect or participation was, in students' opinion, significant or not. Have a discussion to arrive at consensus as to how "significance" is to be evaluated. (For example: how many people affected; how seriously affected—life or death situation; forced migration, or career threat, as opposed to scarcity or inconvenience; effects long- or short-term?)

3. Have half the class write down what they consider to have been the three or four most significant ways the war affected women and what characteristics

of women would have modified the impact of the conflict. Have the other half of the class do the same for women who actively participated in the war.

4. Explain to students that these ideas are hypotheses about women in World War II and that students will look for evidence to confirm, modify, or contradict their hypotheses as they study this unit. Have students share their hypotheses and defend their choices.

5. Introduce students to the idea that in each of the countries at war, traditional beliefs existed about women's "nature" and their "proper role," for example, that "woman's place is in the home." Ask students, as they work with materials in this unit, to keep alert to 1) the ways such ideas influenced women's experience (for example, German reluctance to enforce women's registration for a labor draft), and 2) the ways the war affected these traditional ideas (for example, if women's place is in the home, how can the government draft them to work in factories?)

6. Compare the source documents in this unit to the discussion of the same topic in the class textbook. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each presentation? Based on the information you have studied, discuss changes you would recommend in the textbook's presentation of the topic without significantly changing the space devoted to it. What information in the textbook would you shorten, condense, or leave out? What material would you add, and why? Write a letter to the textbook's author, making recommendations for changing the textbook's presentation of the topic of this unit? Explain why you recommend these changes.

7. Summative assessment exercise for entire unit: Go back to the hypotheses developed in Introductory activities 3 and 5. Ask students to explain, orally or in writing, how what they have learned confirms, modifies, or contradicts their hypotheses.

1928	*	Nationalist Republic of China established by Chiang Kai-shek, after Civil War against warlords, initially with Communist help, then fighting against them.
1931	*	Japan invades Manchuria and installs Pu Yi, deposed last Manchu Emperor of China, as "puppet" ruler.
1932-37	*	USSR: over 3 million women enter labor force.
1933	*	Hitler is named Chancellor of Germany. First centralized concentration camp for women (Moringen) established, as is Dachau.
1934-35	*	In China, after years of resisting Nationalist attacks, Mao Zedong leads remnants of Communist Red Army to Yenan on 6,000 mile "Long March" to escape Nationalists. Communists in Yenan favor gender equality, but only if it is not at expense of "family harmony."
1935	*	Italy invades Ethiopia.
	*	In Germany, Nuremberg Laws deprive Jews of citizenship and, to protect "pure Aryan blood," forbid Germans marriage or sex with Jews.
	*	Nazi policy explicitly states that men's world is the state and that they serve it by fighting. Women's world is the home, but bearing children is an analogue of battle, and motherhood is the way women serve the state. The principle of gender equality is rejected as "the hallmark of a decadent democratic order."

1937	*	Japan invades North China.
	*	Chinese Nationalists and Communists agree to fight together against the Japanese as a "United Front" with help from both the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Nationalist women have no vote; work as nurses, care for orphans, and teach home management and literacy to other women. Communist women have vote, work on farms and in industry, and provide medical support; some serve in army, party, and congress.
1939	*	Soviet-Nazi pact.
	*	Germany invades Poland.
	*	France and England declare war on Germany.
	*	German Labor Service Law becomes binding on women, but due to high-level Nazi disapproval, is not enforced; women in Labor Service never exceed 150,000.
1940	*	Germany invades and conquers France. Resistance groups organize, some with one-third women members.
	*	Germany prepares to invade Britain.
	*	In Britain, volunteers for Women's Land Army outnumber jobs employers are willing to give them three to one.
	*	Blitz (bombing of London); 13,000 tons of high explosives expended,13,000 people killed; bombing extended to provincial towns.
	*	Japan, Germany, and Italy sign alliance (Tripartite Pact); some eastern European countries join.

1941	*	Germany invades Soviet Russia; "Great Patriotic War" for U.S.S.R. begins.
	*	U.S. Congress passes Land-Lease Bill.
	*	In Germany, authorization given for "the final solution of the Jewish question."
	*	Japanese attack Pearl Harbor; U.S. and Britain declare war on Japan.
	*	In Communist Yenan in China, soldiers, peasants, women, and men collaborate in war effort; the class struggle against landlords and capitalists, Mao's "protracted war," is fought at the same time as the guerrilla war against the Japanese.
	*	In Britain, National Service Act makes women liable for conscription. Those aged twenty to forty-five are registered for national service and drafted for jobs as needed, starting with young unmarried women with no "necessary household duties."
1942	*	Large-scale Allied bombing of civilians in German towns (48,000 tons of bombs).
	*	U.S. creates War Manpower Commission and its Women's Advisory Committee. Equalization of pay for women doing men's jobs is permitted but not required by government. (Equal pay legislation was passed by two states before WWII, four more during the war, and seventeen more in 1945. Federal legislation had to wait for Equal Pay Act of 1963).
	*	Executive Order 9066 relocates Japanese-Americans to concentration camps.
	*	In U.S.S.R. all women aged sixteen to forty-five are made liable for war service.
	*	Battles of El Alamein, Midway, and Stalingrad.
	*	In Germany, Wannsee Conference works out details of Jewish extermination as "final solution." Treblinka, just one of several systematic killing centers, starts operating; some 870,000 Jews killed there in a year.

1943	*	Allies invade Sicily.
	*	Allies extend bombing of German cities (207,000 tons of bombs.)
	*	Hitler bans public reference to the "final solution of the Jewish question" and again rejects the idea of mobilizing women for labor service.
	*	In Britain, women forty-five to fifty are registered for compulsory call-up;demand for women's Land Army and for women as industrial workers far exceeds supply.
1944	*	D-Day: Normandy landing of Allies
	*	German V1 offensive against southeast Britain; a million children, some with their mothers, leave target areas.
	*	U.S. Women's Advisory Committee (but not War Manpower Commission), favors extending compulsory service to women.
	*	German resistance tries unsuccessfully to assassinate Hitler; V2 rockets launched against London.
	*	In U.S.S.R. siege of Leningrad ended; nearly one million of its inhabitants die from artillery fire, bombs, and starvation; Russian legislation gives top priority to various measures intended to increase the birth rate.
1945	*	Germans surrender.
	*	U.S. drops atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Japanese surrender.

THE IMPACT ON WOMEN

DRAMATIC MOMENT

He Was an SS Man, He Had to Go

"Every morning around four o'clock, I heard steps, steps, steps. It was Russian prisoners from a nearby camp going to work. They were brought here to our little train station. Every morning at four I woke and got up and saw these sad figures going by, some without shoes. In the winter. *There was ice and snow. And completely starving and* completely *in rags. But I couldn't give them anything. There were always guards. German soldiers. It wasn't possible."*

Frau Brixius felt that such memories, unlike those the soldiers had, led to much estrangement between German men and women. "At home, one experiences very grave things, upsetting things, unusual things. And the other [person] lives in Russia or France or somewhere in captivity and experiences things with which the woman could not empathize. Then suddenly he comes back. For everybody, that certainly was very difficult, and for many, it simply was impossible to be together again. The woman had learned how to forge ahead and help in emergencies and protect her children and earn money and get food or even steal it, if she couldn't find anything else to eat. She could no longer be the true devoted wife who only did what the man wants."

[In 1944, she decided to divorce her husband. However:] "Three or four weeks before the war was over, he was here on leave. And I knew, clearly, *like anyone who could think, observe a little, it was ending. That we'd lost the war or would soon lose it. And I said to him, 'Stay here. Hide yourself here. Don't go back.' I'd have hidden him."*

"And a cousin of mine came, the black sheep in the family. He was an SS man. A completely dear human being, a completely faithful relative still. Who certainly never did anything bad, but was enthusiastic about this war. He had some gold medal, and was an SS officer. He came to us as he was fleeing. As a human being we liked him very much — helpful and loving and attentive and faithful and we let him stay here* one *night. Then my mother said, 'As hard as it is, you have to move on. We can't keep you here.' He had to go. . . . "*

* The SS was the Schutzstaffel, the Nazi Party police.

From Alison Owings, *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 206-208.

A. OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the degree to which Nazi ideology, including ideas about women, constrained women's lives, experiences, and freedom of choice.

2. To analyze ways in which the characteristics of different women, and their relationships to men, affected their experiences during the war.

3. To help students grapple with moral choices people have made in particular historical circumstances.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

Sample discussion questions for "A Wife's Dilemma: Living with the Kommandant of a Death Camp:"

1. Was it different experiences or different attitudes to the Kommandant's work, or both, that caused problems for the Stangls' marriage? Explain your answer.

2. What actions were open to Mrs. Stangl, given her feelings towards her husband and his job, as well as German attitudes towards women, Jews, and Nazi officers? What would have been the likely consequences of various possible courses of action?

3. What responses to Mrs. Stangl's plea for advice could have been given other than Father Mario's?

4. What advice to Mrs.Stangl would be the most ethical or moral? The most practical? Why?

5. How would the situation have differed if Mrs. Stangl had been the death-camp Kommandant and her husband was asking for advice?

Sample discussion questions for "No Time for Politics, but a Resister All the Same?:"

1. How would you define "resistance" to a political regime? Produce a definition and assess how well it fits the information you have about women during World War II. Would your definition fit pro-Nazi activists in the democracies? Pro-Communists in Nationalist-held parts of China? Why or why not?

2. Given her family circumstances and the situation in Germany, in what other ways could Mrs. Haferkampf have resisted the Nazi regime? How could she have further avoided supporting it? What might the results have been?

3. Compare the experiences and actions of Mrs. Stangl and Mrs. Hafenkampf. To what extent were their lives governed by their husbands' experience?

4. To what extent and in what ways were Mrs. Stangl and Mrs. Haferkampf behaving in accord with Nazi society's ideal for women? To what extent, and in what ways, did they contradict that ideal ?

Sample discussion questions for "We Are Being Hunted to Death All Through Europe:"

1. What difference did being a woman make to those in the Dutch concentration camp described here?

2. Compare the choice Hillesum made in going to work at the camp and the young boy made in running away. For what might one praise or blame either of them? Why?

3. Which of the three women in the readings do you consider to have most actively participated in the war? Explain your answer.

4. Compare the material about the Holocaust in the class textbook with the information in this unit. What are the positive and negative points about each approach?

5. What is the relative value of a letter written at the time, in comparison with a recollection in an interview many years later, as historical evidence? Which of the original sources in this section is most likely to have been distorted by self-interest? Explain.

Sample activity that may serve as assessment:

Create a set of diary entries by an imaginary woman in Germany in the early 1940s. How do they reflect her attitude toward the ideology of "children, kitchen, church;" the war; the Nazi party; and the persecution of Jews? What characteristics of this imaginary woman might help to explain the attitudes reflected in her diary? (Students might be asked, perhaps in groups, to pre-design the characteristics of the imaginary woman: her age, class, marital status, religion, family members, husband's or father's job, and level of Nazi participation.)

Sample summary discussion questions that may serve as oral or written assessment:

1. What means can you identify that the Nazis used to control opposition?

2. What justifications can you identify that the Nazis made for their actions?

3. What justifications can you identify that kept non-Nazis from resisting Nazism?

4. What ethical dilemmas did Nazism create?

Sample summary exercises that may serve as oral or written assessment:

1. Taking into account all the information available from your textbook, class work, and this unit, explain why Nazism was, for a time, successful.

2. In living under Nazi rule during World War II, what difference was being a woman likely to have made? What characteristics of women may have had an influence on their experience?

Managing Husband, Children, War —and Genocide

Women in Nazi Germany were encouraged to have as many healthy babies as possible and to serve the state by devoting themselves to their husbands and children. The slogan "children, kitchen, church" (*Kinder, Kuche, Kirche*) sums up the favored ideology. Though war propaganda also invited women to "make munitions for their sons," their response was weaker than in Allied countries. To be sure, the invitation was also more lukewarm. The Nazi government had the power to conscript women for war work but never did so; and it only spottily followed up on the 1943 law requiring women to register for work so they could be called up at need. German prisoners of war , forced laborers brought in from occupied territories, and people imprisoned in concentration camps took up the slack.

Women did not serve in the army but were attached to the various branches of the military as uniformed "*Helferinnen*" ("helpers"). They were kept strictly away from combat. They were forbidden to use firearms, even to defend themselves against capture.

Opposition of German women to Hitler and Nazism was more often passive than active, and, as far as is known, not widespread. Non-compliance and defiance in low-profile ways, slowing down on the job, resisting having a large family, or refusing to enter the workplace are examples of opposition strategies. However, women also performed acts of kindness toward victims of Nazism, and they gave more substantial help, perhaps the most dangerous being the hiding of Jews. It is notable that about 4,500 Jews (out of a pre-war population of about 240,000) survived by hiding in Germany with the help of non-Jews. Also, Jewish women participated in such episodes as the Warsaw ghetto uprising and concentration camp mutinies.

Hitler had always been anti-Semitic, and he was fanatic about creating a racially pure and physically splendid "Aryan" master-race. The Hitler Youth, he said, had to be "hard as steel, strong and pliant as leather, and fast as greyhounds." The weak, sick, and racially impure had to be gotten rid of as fast as possible. At first he and his followers saw forced emigration as the "solution" for the "Jewish problem." This policy ground to a halt as other countries, including Britain and the U.S., increasingly restricted Jewish immigration. Meanwhile, starting in 1939, the Nazis launched a program of forced euthansia for the improvement of the race by gassing on a large scale non-Jewish Germans who were feeble-minded, senile, or certified incurably insan10e. By the end of the war, some 100,000 patients had been put to death. The Nazis applied their euthanasia policy and method of disposal to concentration camp inmates—Jews, political prisoners, habitual criminals, and even some sick German soldiers. These groups, plus Poles, Russians, and others considered "unfit," made up the eleven million or so people, about half of them Jews, killed by Hitler's order.

Hitler's actual decree ordering the deliberate extermination of all Jews has not survived. However, the Nazis are known to have worked out the details of this "final solution" at the Wannsee Conference in Berlin in 1942. They decided to deport Jews to specially constructed death camps to dispose of them by gas followed by cremation. The Nazis thought firing squads were too slow, messy, public, and had undesirable effects on the nerves of the executioners. SS men* who rounded up Jews for execution or deportation to death camps often received an extra daily ration of brandy. German women who were mothers, wives, daughters, sisters, or friends of these men were bound to be affected as well.

* SS men were members of the *Schutzstaffel,* or Protection Squad, the Nazi Party police distinguished by their all-black uniforms carrying the death's head emblem, a symbol appropriate for the jobs entrusted to them.

A Wife's Dilemma:
Living with the *Kommandant* of a Death Camp

Franz Stangl, Kommandant of Treblinka, largest of the Nazi death-camps, was sentenced to life imprisonment by a West German court in 1970 for co-responsibility in the murder of some nine hundred thousand people. At first, the Nazi camp officers killed the victims at Treblinka, almost all of them Jews, with carbon monoxide fumes from the engines of captured tanks and trucks. Later, they used the "more efficient" Zyclon-B gas to massacre about one thousand people per hour during working days lasting sometimes up to fourteen hours. Typically, about thirty SS men (who took an oath of secrecy and received a bonus of eighteen marks a day and frequent home leaves) ran extermination camps such as Treblinka along with about one hundred "helpers" with whips and guns, often trusties from among Soviet military prisoners who volunteered for the job. Women also acted as guards (some with the worst of reputations for cruelty) in death camps, though not at Treblinka Of the millions of victims—about one third of them children—dragged to the four death camps in Poland, eighty-seven survived.

A German-speaking woman reporter for a British newspaper interviewed Theresa Stangl, the Treblinka kommandant's wife, in 1971 in Brazil, where Stangl then lived. At the time of the events described in the document below, the Stangls had two daughters, six and four years old. Franz Stangl had already served as Police Superintendent of the Euthanasia Institute (part of Hitler's euthanasia program) and as kommandant of the Sobibor extermination camp.

"A Wife's Dilemma"

"I didn't see Paul again until July," Frau Stangl said. "And that was a terrible time — he stayed almost a month. By that time I had thought more about Treblinka. Of course I was pregnant, that probably also influenced my state of mind. At Christmas, you see, he had told me again that he was the 'highest ranking' officer in Treblinka and I had asked him — again — what that meant. Because he'd never mentioned being Kommandant — never. He answered that

it meant everyone had to defer to him, and do what he said. I said, 'But then . . . my God, Paul, then you are in charge?' But he answered, 'No, Wirth is in charge.' And again I had believed him, I supposed because I needed to — I had to believe. How could I have gone on otherwise? As it was, I often looked at him and thought to myself, 'Who are you? Oh my God, what are you that you can bear even to see this? What — oh God, what are you seeing with these eyes which look at me?' Still, that Christmas I had still believed him: he said so often, so firmly that he wanted only to get out, that he could ask for nothing better. And even when I said, 'If you are really doing only administrative things and nothing bad, well, at least you are not at the front' — because, yes, I did say that — he answered, 'No, no, I must get out of it.'

"It is true, you know, although I cried, oh so many times when I thought of those people they were killing, I never never knew there were children too, or even women. I, too, rationalized it I suppose; I told myself, I suppose, that we were at war and that they were killing the men; men, you know: enemies. I suppose I thought — or told myself — that the women and children were being left at home. I know it isn't logical, but I suppose I just didn't dare to think further. What I did know and did think was already more than I could bear. But it's true. I also said to myself many times: if he did refuse, if he did just run away, throw away his life and ours, it would still go on. There would not be just hundreds, there would be thousands only too happy to take his place. Well, that's how I thought until July. Because until then I still kept believing that he was trying to get out, as he told me, and that he would succeed in getting a transfer.

"But by the time he came on leave in July I had ceased to believe; it had been too long. And now I began to see the terrible change in him. No one else saw this. And I too had only glimpses; occasional glimpses of another man, somebody with a different, a totally changed face; someone I didn't know; that face that you too saw later, in the prison — red, suffused, swollen, protruding veins, coarse — he who was never coarse or vulgar, who was always loving and kind. That was when I began to nag him — at least he called it that. I asked him again and again, 'Paul, why are you still there? It's a year now, more than a year. All the time you said you'd manage it, you'd wangle a transfer. Paul,' I'd say, 'I'm afraid for you. I am afraid for your soul. You must leave. Run away if must be. We will come with you, anywhere.' — 'How?' He said. 'They'd catch me. They catch everybody. And that would be the end for all of us. I in a concentration camp, you in Sippenhaft [detention for compromised relatives of unreliables] — perhaps the children too; it's unthinkable.' That's what he said. Well, you understand, I wasn't thinking of

Germany's victory or defeat, I was only thinking of him, my man, and what was happening to him inside, and I went on nagging him. He'd get terribly angry, quite out of character for him. 'Is this what my whole leave is going to be like?' he'd shout. 'Aren't you ever going to stop pestering me?'

"I . . . I could no longer be with him . . . you know . . . near him. It was quite terrible, for both of us. We were staying in the mountains with this friend of my mother's, a priest, Father Mario. She had arranged for us to stay there, for our holiday. And one day I couldn't stand it any longer; I no longer knew where to turn, I had to talk to somebody. So I went to see Father Mario. I said, 'Father, I must talk to you. I want to talk to you under the seal of the confessional.' He is dead now. I can tell you about it. And I told him about Treblinka. I said, 'I know you won't believe it but there is this terrible place in Poland and they are killing people there — they are killing the Jews there. And my Paul,' I said, 'my Paul is there. He is working there. What shall I do?' I asked him. 'Please tell me. Please help us. Please advise us.'

"You see, I thought — I suppose — the priests had ways; there were convents up in the mountains where one could disappear, hide — I had heard things.

"He gave me such a terrible shock. I remember, he brushed his face with his hand and then he said, 'We are living through terrible times, my child. Before God and my conscience, if I had been in Paul's place, I would have done the same. I absolve him from all guilt.'

"I walked away like a zombie, in a dream, in a nightmare. How could he? Then I told myself, he is old, perhaps he is senile; it was the only explanation. But afterwards . . . I don't know . . . after all, he was a priest . . . I had carried this awful thing around with me for a year, I had thought and thought and cried and worried myself sick over what would happen to my Paul, if not on earth, then after his death . . . and then he, a priest, had taken it so . . . not calmly, but, well, matter-of-factly. I don't know. I could no longer think at all."

From Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: An Examination of Conscience* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 233-236.

No Time for Politics, but a Resister All the Same?

Mrs.Wilhelmine Haferkamp was married to a member of the Nazi Party. The party gave her medals, honoring her as the mother of ten children. She had her daughters join the League of German Girls (Bund Deutscher Madel or BdM), the female division of the Hitler Youth movement. She never joined the Party herself, however, and she did not hesitate to act against its ideals, in ways that the following document reveals. It is part of an interview given to a German-speaking American woman journalist a half-century after the events described.

"No Time for Politics, but a Resister All the Same?"

What did she think when Hitler came to power?

"I didn't know him. I had a lot to do with the children. I always said, I had no time. To think about it, nicht? Ja, I often complained. There were meetings there and meetings there and there meetings. Ne, what did one have then? Our 'Dicke,' one of the older children, when she was in school, had to be in the BdM. Otherwise she couldn't go to school. You were not promoted [to the next grade], you had no advantages at all, you didn't have this and didn't have that. You had to be in the BdM. I still see ours running with the little shirts and the little blue skirts and the black scarves." Asked what she thought about the organization itself, she said she thought it was like the Girl Scouts, or a gymnastics or singing club. "They got their uniforms, nicht? And marched through the streets. The didn't learn anything harmful. . . ."

"If you went to high school, the parents had to pay. And if you were in the NSDAP [the Nazi Party], everything was paid." Did she join the Party too? "Never. My mother wasn't in it, either. To the contrary, a couple times I got a warning."

Frau Wilhelmine Haferkamp had also committed the crime of "füttern den Feind" [feeding the enemy]. In the Nazis' alliteratively insulting phrase, the "enemy" was further dehumanized by being equated with animals. Füttern means "to fodder." In Frau Haferkamp's eyes, however, the "enemy" were merely miserable men. "Now what really happened, was cold outside. And every

day I cooked a big pot of milk soup for the children, nicht? Nice and hot. Got a lot of milk on the children's ration cards. And then I put a whole cube of butter in it, the pot was full, and a lot of sugar, because sugar nourishes, nicht? And I lived upstairs. My mother-in-law lived downstairs. At the time I was already bombed out. And I looked out the window and pointed to 'the bandolios' [what she called the laborers] that I was putting something in the hallway. They were afraid to get out of the ditches and they wanted to eat it. Then I went to the watchman and I said, 'Listen, you too are married.' I said, 'I have many children.' In the meantime he saw that, because he was at his post until [the prisoners] were done. 'And I cooked a big pot of milk soup.' I say, 'Can I not give it to the poor men?'

". . . One day, my husband got a card from the Party. They would like him to appear in the Party office.

"And they said, 'Listen, your wife is sure doing fine things. How can she fodder our enemies?' 'Ja, well, I can't do anything about it, I'm not always home, I don't see it.' Then when my husband came home, he really yelled at me [hit me with noise], he said, 'You will land me in the devil's kitchen if you keep doing that. And I am a Party member.' Had to be, nicht? 'And what do you think will happen when they catch me? They will take me somewhere else.'" The scene was repeated, on the street and off. "They were so cold, so cold. They [the Nazis] came a couple times and said to my husband, 'Listen, Herr Haferkamp, if your wife keeps doing that, ne? Then she'll get a warning.'"

". . . Ja. There were Jews. There were even a lot of Jews. We even knew a Jew we did not know was a Jew. Eichherz was their name. Bought furniture when we first married. And my husband went to the doctor. Dr. Flöss was his name and was also a Nazi. Had a big buck rank, but I don't remember what. And my husband laid his jacket over the chair. The [receipt] book fell out of his pocket, that you bought furniture you couldn't pay for all at once. My husband always took the money there until it was paid for. And the doctor saw that. Then he said,"— she yelled in imitation — "What? You as a member of the Party, you buy from a Jew?' And he didn't know at all it was a Jew.

"We had a butcher store, he was a Jew. We also didn't know it was Jews. Serfuss was his name. We always got meat there. One day, my mother wanted to buy meat, a whole lot of people are standing there. They would have hit my mother with a club. 'You are buying from Jews, you are buying from Jews.' Wanted to chase her away. My mother bawling, my mother said, 'As long as I've lived here, I buy here.' My mother was very, very angry. Very angry. . . ."

One classmate "also had a child every year" and "did not get a penny from Hitler, that is, from Hitler's side, because they all had inherited diseases. You had to be healthy, the children had to be healthy, so that you can propagate your heirs and no sick ones. I got all that child money and she got nothing at all. She often said, 'I can't help it. I have to nourish my children just like you.' I said, 'I can't help it, either.'"

. . . With so many children herself, did Frau Haferkamp get a Mother's Cross? "Oh, ja," with some enthusiasm. "First I got the bronze. Then I had two more children and I received the silver one, but had to give the bronze one back. And when I had the ninth child, I got the gold one and had to give up the silver one. I was proud of it. Yes, indeed, I was proud. Was really proud of it. When I got the gold, also when I got the silver, there was a big celebration in a school, where the mothers were all invited for coffee and cake, nicht?

"You could not say a lot. Back then in the Nazi time, you were not even allowed to have your own opinion, nicht? If it already somehow was known that he or he complained about the Party, nicht? We knew one. He complained. Jeschke. My husband knew the [Jeschke] son from the singing club. They already had an eye on him a long time. He was a thorn in the eye of the Nazis, nicht? They always said to him, Communist, but was not a Communist. The parents were so nice. They were such nice people. And one day the word was, they beat up Jeschke. Nobody knew where. Nobody knew how. He's in the hospital."

. . . What did she think when the war began? Frau Haferkamp gave no memory of her own. "My husband said, 'My God, my God, we can all poison ourselves. We will lose the war.' He said, 'Man, they will kill us.' I got really scared, nicht? But I would be lying if I say it was a bad time. It is not true. Well, for me at the beginning with the ration cards, with doctors and so on, we were not hungry. I was also industrious. I knitted, I sewed. I got some material from this

one and some material from that one, I could always make my little ones this, make them that. People came who said, 'Could you make a pair of pants for our boy, make this, make that?' If the collar was worn through, I cut off a piece from here, made a new collar, and put on a piece of white muslin below. Ja, then I always got something for it, nicht?" She said many people also asked her for some of her ration cards. 'Do you have an extra card for milk for me? Do you have a sugar card?' I didn't sell them. I gave them to people."

From Alison Owings, *Frauen: German Women Recall the Third Reich* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1993), 19-22, 24-29.

"We Are Being Hunted to Death All Through Europe"

After the Germans invaded Holland in 1940, the Dutch government camp, which originally had been used to house Jewish refugees entering the country illegally, became an assembly point for the deportation of Jews to Nazi death camps. The Dutch camp's operations were in the hands of German Jews, who had been in charge from the beginning. Camp inmates were supposed to work for the German war effort; and a few thousand were more or less "permanent" residents. Some one hundred thousand, however, passed through the facility only briefly, having been collected from all over Holland and almost all destined for the death camps. The Nazis made the German Jews running the camp responsible for making up the lists of those to be dispatched. The Nazi leadership decided on the number that had to go, when, and to what end point, then passed on their orders to their Jewish subordinates.

Etty Hillesum was a young Jewish woman in her twenties. She had a law degree and had also studied Slavonic languages and psychology. She worked for the Jewish Council, an organization Germans ordered occupied countries to create, to serve as intermediaries between the Nazis and Jews. Members of Jewish Councils had some privileges some of the time and were sometimes able to gain concessions from some Nazis for some Jews.

Friends and members of the Dutch Resistance offered to hide Hillesum, but she refused. Instead, she volunteered to go to the transfer camp to help her people there as much as she could. In 1943, two weeks after she wrote the following letter to a friend, she and her family were shipped to Auschwitz. The Nazis gassed her parents on arrival. She survived for about two more months.

"We Are Being Hunted to Death All Through Europe"

. . . and prisoners were being moved out. The deportees, mainly men, stood with their packs behind the barbed wire. So many of them looked tough and ready for anything. An old acquaintance — I didn't recognize him straightaway; a shaven head often changes people completely — called out to me with a smile, "If they don't manage to do me in, I'll be back."

But the babies, those tiny piercing screams of the babies, dragged from their cots in the middle of the night. . . .

And then there was that paralyzed young girl, who didn't want to take her dinner plate along and found it so hard to die. Or the terrified young boy: he had thought he was safe, that was his mistake, and when he realized he was going to have to go anyway, he panicked and ran off. His fellow Jews had to hunt him down. If they didn't find him, scores of others would be put on the transport in his place. He was caught soon enough, hiding in a tent, but "notwithstanding" . . . "notwithstanding," all those others had to go on transport anyway, as a deterrent, they said. And so, many good friends were dragged away by that boy. Fifty victims for one moment of insanity. Or rather: he didn't drag them away — our commandant did, someone of whom it is sometimes said that he is a gentleman. Even so, will the boy be able to live with himself, once it dawns on him exactly what he's been the cause of? And how will all the other Jews on board the train react to him? That boy is going to have a very hard time. . . .

The transport lists are never published until the very last moment, but some of us know well in advance that our names will be down. A young girl called me. She was sitting bolt upright in her bed, eyes wide open. This girl has thin wrists and a peaky little face. She is partly paralyzed, and has just been learning to walk again, between two nurses, one step at a time. "Have you heard? I have to go." We look at each other for a long moment. It is as if her face has disappeared; she is all eyes. Then she says in a level, gray little voice, "Such a pity, isn't it? That everything you have learned in life goes for nothing." And, "How hard it is to die." Suddenly the unnatural rigidity of her expression gives way and she sobs, "Oh, and the worst of it all is having to leave Holland!" And, "Oh, why wasn't I allowed to die before ..." Later, during the night, I saw her again, for the last time.

There was a little woman in the washhouse, a basket of dripping clothes on her arm. She grabbed hold of me; she looked deranged. A flood of words poured over me: "That isn't right, how can that be right? I've got to go and I won't even be able to get my washing dry by tomorrow. And my child is sick, he's feverish, can't you fix things so that I don't have to go? And I don't have enough things for the child, the rompers they sent me are too small, I need the bigger size, oh, it's enough to drive you mad. And you're not even allowed to take a blanket along, we're going to freeze to death, you didn't think of that, did you? There's a cousin of mine here, he came here the same time I did, but he doesn't have to go, he's got the right papers. Couldn't you help me to get some too? Just say I don't have to go, do you think they'll leave the children with their mothers, that's right, you come back again tonight, you'll help me then, won't you, what do you think, would my cousin's papers . . . ?"

". . . Ah, there she goes again!" It is the tough little ghetto woman, who is racked with hunger the whole time because she never gets any parcels. She has seven children here. She trips pluckily and busily about on her little short legs. "All I know is, I've got seven children and they need a proper mother, you can be sure of that!" With nimble gestures she is busy stuffing a jute bag full of her belongings. "I'm not leaving anything behind; my husband was sent through here a year ago, and my two oldest boys have been through as well. . . ."

She bustles about, she packs, she's busy, she has a kind word for everyone who goes by. A plain, dumpy ghetto woman with greasy black hair and little short legs. She has a shabby, short-sleeved dress on, which I can imagine her wearing when she used to stand behind the washtub, back in Jodenbreestraat. And now she is off to Poland in the same old dress, a three days' journey with seven children. "That's right, seven children, and they need a proper mother, believe me!"

You can tell that the young woman over there is used to luxury and that she must have been very beautiful. She is a recent arrival. She had gone into hiding to save her baby. Now she is here, through treachery, like so many others. Her husband is in the punishment barracks. She looks quite pitiful now ...

What will this young woman, already in a state of collapse, look like after three days in an overcrowded freight car with men, women, children, and babies all thrown together, bags and

baggage, a bucket in the middle their only convenience? Presumably they will be sent on to another transit camp, and then on again from there.

We are being hunted to death all through Europe. . . .

. . . The commandant is annoyed. A young Jew has had the effrontery to run away. One can't really call it a serious attempt to escape — he absconded from the hospital in a moment of panic, a thin jacket over his blue pyjamas, and in a clumsy, childish way took refuge in a tent, where he was picked up quickly enough after a search of the camp. But if you are a Jew you may not run away, may not allow yourself to be stricken with panic. The commandant is remorseless. As a reprisal, and without warning, scores of others are being sent on the transport with the boy, including quite a few who had thought they were firmly at anchor here. This system happens to believe in collective punishment. And all those planes overhead couldn't have helped to improve the commandant's mood, though that is a subject on which he prefers to keep his own counsel.

He is inspecting his troops: the sick, infants in arms, young mothers, and shaven-headed men. . . . This time the quota was really quite small, all considered: a mere thousand Jews, the extra twenty being reserves. For it is always possible — indeed, quite certain this time — that a few will die or be crushed to death on the way. . . .

The tide of helpers gradually recedes; people go back to their sleeping quarters. So many exhausted, pale, and suffering faces. One more piece of our camp has been amputated. Next week yet another piece will follow. This is what has been happening now for over a year, week in, week out. We are left with just a few thousand. A hundred thousand Dutch members of our race are toiling away under an unknown sky or lie rotting in some unknown soil. We know nothing of their fate. It is only a short while, perhaps, before we find out, each one of us in his own time. For we are all marked down to share that fate, of that I have not a moment's doubt. But I must go now and lie down and sleep for a little while. I am a bit tired and dizzy. Then later I have to go to the laundry to track down the facecloth that got lost. But first I must sleep. As for the future, I am firmly resolved to return to you after my wanderings. In the meantime, my love once again, you dear people.

From Etty Hillesum, letter, in Carol Rittner and John K. Roth, eds., *Different Voices: Women and the Holocaust* (New York: Paragon, 1993), 48-57.

THE INFLUENCE OF BOTH THE WAR AND CULTURAL VIEWS ABOUT WOMEN ON AMERICAN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

DRAMATIC MOMENT

My Husband Urged Me to Help Out for the War Effort

My Dear Mr. Hart,

In reply to your questions about women working I should like to say that . . . I have continued to keep in touch with the need for women working, their problems & the attitudes of the community about it . . . The people of this community all respect women who work regardless of the type of work. Women from the best families & many officers wives work at our hospital. It is not at all uncommon to meet at evening parties in town women who work in the kitchens or offices of our hospital. The city mayor's wife too works there.

The church disapproves of women working who have small children. The church has a strong influence in our county.

For the canning season in our county men's & women's clubs & the church all recruited vigorously for women for the canneries. It was "the thing to do" to work so many hrs. a week at the canneries.

I personally have encouraged officer's wives who have no chidren to get out and work. Those of us who have done so have been highly respected by the others and we have not lost social standing. In fact many of the social affairs are arranged at our convenience.

Some husbands do not approve of wives working & this has kept home some who do not have small children. Some of the women just do not wish to put forth the effort.

. . . These days one has to do everything — one cannot buy services as formerly. For instance — laundry. I'm lucky. I can send out much of our laundry to the hospital but even so there is a

goodly amount that must be done at home — all the ironing of summer dresses is very tiring. I even have to press my husband's trousers — a thing I never did in all my married life. The weekly housecleaning — shoe shining — all things we formerly had done by others. Now we also do home canning. I never in the 14 yrs. of my married life canned one 1 jar. Last summer I put up dozens of quarts per instructions of Uncle Sam. I'm only one among many who is now doing a lot of manual labor foreign to our usual custom. I just could not take on all that & an outside job, too. . . .

This is a farming area & many farm wives could not under any arrangements take a war job. They have too much to do at their farm jobs & many now have to go into the fields, run tractors & do other jobs formerly done by men. I marvel at all these women are able to do & feel very inadequate next to them.

Here is the difference between a man working & a woman as seen in our home — while I prepare the evening meal, my husband reads the evening paper. We then do the dishes together after which he reads his medical journal or cognates over some lecture he is to give or some problem at his lab. I have to make up grocery lists, mend, straighten up a drawer, clean out the ice box, press clothes, put away anything strewn about the house, wash bric a brac, or do several hundreds of small "woman's work is never done stuff. . . ."

This has been a lot of personal experience but I'm sure we are no exception. I thought I was thro working in 1938. My husband urged me to help out for the war effort — he's all out for getting the war work done & he agreed to do his share of the housework. He is not lazy but he found we could not do it. I hope this personal experience will help to give you an idea of some of the problems.

[Norma Yerger Queen]

Letter from Norman Yerger Queen to Clyde Hart, head of the Correspondence Panels Section of the Office of War Information, 26 May 1944, National Archives of the United States, quoted in Carol Ruth Berkin and Mary Beth Norton, *Women of America: A History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 357-359.

A. OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the impact on American women of World War II's demand that they enter the labor force, especially defense-related jobs.

2. To understand the ambivalence about women's work outside the home, especially in "men's jobs," and the roots of this ambiva lence in ideas about "women's nature" and "proper place".

3. To analyze different kinds of historical evidence for reliability.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

Sample Discussion Questions and Activities for "Enticing Women Into War Work:"

1. What assumptions about women can you infer from the advertisements?

2. List the kinds of appeals for entering war work used in the advertisements (for example, others' approval or disapproval, shame, vanity, patriotism). What other motives might women have had for taking a job? What characteristics would influence whether or not a woman would take a job (for example, class, ethnicity, race, marriage, motherhood, divorce, transportation, or availability of job).

3. If a rapid, greatly increased, and critically important demand for more workers occurred in the U.S. today, from what part of the population could extra workers be drawn (for example, retired people, the currently unemployed, housewives, students)? If

they had to be drafted, in what order would you call them up? How would you justify your prioritizing the draft (for example, by probable usefulness, flexibility, degree of life disruption, effects on others if called up)?

4. Write advertisements to attract volunteers from each of your target populations into the work force, in an attempt to avoid a labor draft. On what assumptions about the kinds of people they are have you based your appeals?

5. On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the reliability of these ads as a) information about what women were actually like and what motivated them, b) information about what those composing the ads thought women were like and what motivated them. To what extent does the reliability of historical evidence depend on the hypothesis it is intended to support or the question it is intended to answer?

Sample Discussion Questions for "Women at Work in War:"

1. Compare the percentage of women in the labor force in 1941 and 1944. To understand the change and to assess whether it was unusual or important what other information would it be useful to have (for example, figures for earlier and later periods)?

2. What reasons would women have had for leaving the labor force that were usual (that is, reasons they would have had for doing so at other historical periods)? What reasons were special to this particular time (for example, getting married or pregnant, or retiring, as opposed to upgrading into a defense job, following a sweetheart to a new service assignment, needing to nurse a wounded loved one)?

3. In what kinds of jobs did the war produce the greatest short-range changes? In what kinds of jobs were found the most marked long-range effects? (Note: The term "operative" on the "Occupational Patterns" chart stands for factory workers; "private household" stands for being a domestic servant.)

4. How reliable are these statistics as historical evidence of women's experience? Would you consider them more than, less than, or equally reliable compared to the advertisements? Why? What other kinds of information would it help to have in order to assess their reliability as historical evidence? How do the statistics and the advertisements compare to the letter and the interviews in Lesson One for reliability as historical evidence?

5. Is Rosie the Riveter an effective symbol of women's wartime work roles? Explain your answer.

6. What hypothesis would you make to explain the difference in women's labor force participation in Germany and in the U.S. as shown in Graph 1? What evidence from Lesson One and Lesson Two can you produce to support your hypothesis? What other evidence would you expect to find (were you to research it) if your hypothesis is valid?

7. What possible ethical dilemmas, and for whom, does the information in Tables 2 and 3 raise (for example, traditional family values vs. patriotism or women's rights)?

8. List the possible arguments that a husband could have used in opposing his wife's taking a war job. Then list all the arguments a wife wishing to do so could have used. What characteristics of

the family would influence the kinds of arguments used (for example, parenthood or social class)?

Sample Activities:

1. Design, create, or name a symbol that would be as effective, or better, than Rosie the Riveter to stand for women's wartime work. Explain your choice.

2. Role-play a conversations between a wife who wants to take a war job and a husband who opposes this. Have students try this exercise in both same-sex and opposite-sex pairs, and discuss what differences those combinations made to their role-play experience.

3. Write advertisements aimed at 1940's husbands that try to change the mind of those opposing their wives' taking war jobs. Would the advertisements produced be equally appropriate today if a war occurred? Why or why not? If not, how might the advertisement be changed to appeal to people today?

4. Interview one or more women old enough to remember World War II, asking interviewees about their two or three most significant wartime experiences. If the subject of employment does not come up, ask what these women remember about housewives taking new or different kinds of jobs? Summarize Interviews in half a page or so, and share them in class. What conclusions might be drawn from the information collected by the class about the nature and significance of wartime female employment? How reliable are these conclusions? How do they compare, for reliability and content, with the written documents in this unit?

5. Find evidence for and against the hypothesis that the relative level of mobilization of women's labor power contributed to victory for the U.S. and defeat for Germany.

Sample summary exercises that may serve as oral or written assessment:

1. How significant an effect did their entry into the labor force in large numbers, or their change of jobs within the labor force, have on American women? Explain how you have assessed "significance" and support your argument with evidence from all the readings.

2. To what extent were traditional ideas about "women's nature" and "proper place" used, contradicted, reinforced, or changed as a result of large-scale entry into the work force, especially into "men's jobs?" Support your argument with evidence from all the readings.

The Home Front--and Rosie the Riveter

For a wide variety of reasons, American women who had never before held a job flooded into the workforce during the war. They often faced employers who had never hired women workers before. Both sides had to adapt, and it was not always easy.

Accountants calculated that the distraction caused by a woman walking through the plant would cost several hundred dollars in lost male work time. Many women resisted giving up wearing their wedding ring, though it was a hazard when working with certain kinds of machinery. The custom of segregating male and female employees in the same plant spread and intensified. Spouses could not even lunch together in the factory's cafeteria. Attempts to deal with sexual harassment by introducing unisex uniforms or hiring "grey-haired factory chaperones," who advised women about appearance or behavior that was seen as "distracting," did not solve the problem. The War Office advised employers that

> women can be trained for almost any job you've got—but remember 'a woman is not a man'. A woman is a substitute—like plastic instead of a metal. She has special characteristics that lend themselves to new and sometimes to such superior uses.

Employers tried also to allay the fears of long-term male workers that women might replace them, as in this advertisement:

> Are you a tough guy? Have you red fighting blood in your veins? Then here's your chance to do a vitally needed job in heavy war industry—a job that calls for a REAL TWO-FISTED HE-MAN! The pay is good. But more than that, you'll get the satisfaction of doing a job that's really important to winning this war! A JOB NO WOMAN CAN DO !

Acceptance for women grew gradually. Many men adamantly opposed to sharing their workplace with women ended up defending women's performance and right to be there. Of 1,894 different occupations in twenty-one key defense industries, only 331 jobs were found to be "definitely" unsuited for women. By 1945, one of every three civilian workers was female.

The typical American working woman changed from a young single girl before the war to an older married woman during it. This happened partly because the marriage rate and the availability of part-time work increased. Also, the demands of patriotism tempered the disapproval of working wives. The U.S. government had no need to register, let alone draft, women into the labor force. They responded to the combined lure of mass media persuasion and improved work opportunities. Rosie the Riveter became the wartime image of the American woman.

Women also shifted within the workforce. Half of those in domestic service (in 1940 still the most common women's occupation), many of them African American women, moved to higher paying jobs, mostly in industry. Much of white-collar work became pink-collar. Women's union membership tripled, though many unions continued to refuse them admission. By war's end only about one in five women belonged to unions. Their influx into manufacturing and especially defense industries, where wages were highest, made working class women better off. However, equality of wages remained an issue. Before the war, most industries that employed women at all paid them at about two-thirds the rate paid to men doing the same job. This practice continued during the war, despite recommendations for equal pay from the War Labor Board and other organizations.

In spite of wartime changes, polls showed that in both 1936 and 1946 more than 80 percent of Americans (and 75 percent of the women) believed that a woman should not work if her husband has a job. Nearly 90 percent of Americans surveyed in the latter year regarded homemaking as a full-time activity.

Enticing Women Into War Work
Government-sponsored Advertisements

President Roosevelt created the Office of War Information in 1942 to explain government policy and spread information to the public. It collaborated with the War Manpower Commission to "sell the war to women," that is, to convince them to take war jobs. The government campaigns concentrated on appealing to women who would be new to the labor force and assumed that their "target audience" would be housewives reluctant to take jobs.

Official and unofficial propaganda concentrated on women in industry. A lot of songs were written about them, such as "We're the Janes Who Make the Planes," "The Lady at Lockheed," and, most famous, "Rosie the Riveter." Women workers were featured in magazine articles. In spite of their small numbers, women in uniform also became high profile in the mass media. The following advertisements illustrate the main themes of the government's appeal to women.

> *I'm a housewife, too...never worked outside my home until this year. Feeding my family and buying war bonds just didn't seem enough. So I got an eight-hour-a-day job, and managed to run my home besides. My husband's proud of me. . . .*
>
> *War work is "pleasant and as easy as running a sewing machine or using a vacuum cleaner."*
>
> *There is a war job you can do and earn money doing it. You need no experience; you are taught the job you want to do by your employer or given a government training course, FREE. Women-power can produce the goods of war . . . use it . . . speed the victory."*
>
> *Eventually the neighbors are going to think it very strange if you are not working. They will be working too. In fact, any strong, able-bodied woman who is not* completely occupied *with a job and a home is going to be considered a 'slacker' just as much as the man who avoids the draft.*

Every idle machine may mean a dead soldier.

Are you so blinded by 'women's rights' that you have forgotten that nothing but WORK ever earned them? Are you being old-fashioned and getting by just by being a "good wife and mother?"

It may be a bit of a shock, but you are going to have to help! (Addressed to husbands.)

Many service women say they receive more masculine attention — have more dates, a better time — than they ever had in civilian life. Their uniforms have been styled by some of the world's greatest designers to flatter face and figure — their poise and carriage are improved -- they are recognized everywhere as representative of American Womanhood at its best.

From Office of War Information materials, quoted in Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women For War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978) 96-98, 142; and Chester W. Gregory, *Women in Defense Work During World War II* (New York: Exposition Press, 1974), 33.

Women at Work in War

Whether in the labor force or not, virtually all American women worked during the war, as they did at all other times. They worked as homemakers, a 99 percent female job essential to the economy, especially so in wartime. Keeping families healthy and morale high while conserving resources and coping with shortages and rationing meant long hours waiting in line, comparison-shopping for the best buys, skimping on energy-use in favor of walking and performing jobs by hand.

Women in the work force during the war, as at all other times, faced the "double day." After they got off their job for the day, they still had to do all the shopping, cooking, cleaning, and mending. If they were mothers, they had the added complication of worrying about childcare and catching up with their children while managing the housework. In the 1940's, a few companies imaginatively supported working women by offering childcare at the workplace, shift-sharing for women who wanted to work part-time, time off for shopping, or a weekly plan for ordering groceries. Few shops were open after the end of the workday and none on Sundays, and the lunch period was typically only twenty to thirty minutes long. The emotional encouragement many women got from their families helped them cope; but practical assistance was seldom forthcoming. The exasperated author of one article asked, "if a woman can learn to run a drill press, why can't a man learn to run a washing machine?"

Munitions manufacture was the most vital of the defense industries. Factories began employing women even before the war began, though the work was dangerous. The pay was relatively low, partly because many African Americans were employed in the industry and because, owing to the danger of explosions, the factories were mostly in rural areas. Airplane construction was another defense industry that many women entered with considerable success. At Lockheed, two African American women with only a year of experience set an all-time record for riveting speed. Although equal pay for women was rare in any employment. Even so, in-

creased opportunities for earning overtime and time-and-a half pay emerged when, owing to production pressures, protective labor laws were changed to allow women to work at night and on weekends.

Though war work offered women a broader scope of experience, and many took advantage of this, far from all of them did so. Society in general and men in particular remained quite ambivalent about the idea of women, especially married women, working for pay outside the home. Changes the war made in wives' participation in the labor force should be considered in the context of long-range change: in 1890, 5 percent of all married women were in the labor force; in 1987, 56 percent were employed.

Tables 1-3 from public survey by the Office of War Intelligence, quoted in Chester W. Gregory, *Women in Defense Work During World War II* (New York: Exposition Press, 1974), 29, 30; "Occupational Patterns" graphs from U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Women's Bureau, n.d.; graphs I-IV from Leila J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), 76, 77, 79, 179.

Table 1- Movement of Women into and Out of the Labor Force, 1941-1944

PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT	NUMBER OF WOMEN
Employed Dec. 1941	12,090, 000
Not in Labor Force	33,260,000
Entered Labor Force, Dec. 1941-March 1944	6,650,000
Employed March 1944	16,480,000
Stayed in Labor Force, Dec. 1941-March 1944	10,230,000
Left Labor Force, Dec.1941-March 1944	2,180,000

Source: C. W. Gregory, Women in Defense Work During World War II
N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1974, p. 5.

Table 2- Percent of Married Women with Husband Present

PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT	PERCENT OF WOMEN
Those in labor force throughout period	30
Those who newly entered the labor force	36
Those who left labor force	62
Those who did not enter labor force	65

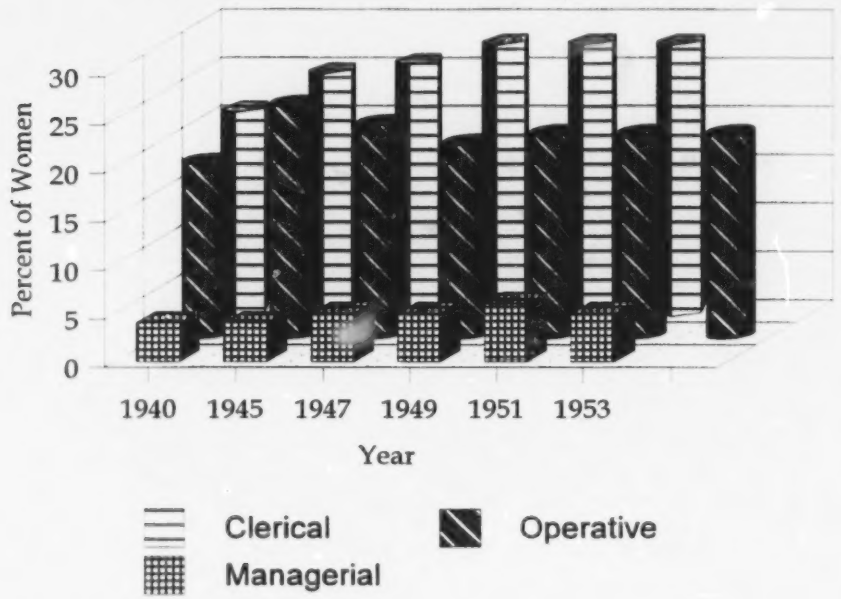
Source: C. W. Gregory, Women in Defense Work During World War II
N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1974, p. 5.

Table 3- **Willingness of woman to take a job, or to have one's wife take a job in a war plant**

WOMEN		MEN	
Willingness to Work	Percent	Willingness to have Wife Work	Percent
Yes	40	Yes	30
No	40	No	50
Yes, if . . .	17	Yes, if . . .	11
No Opinion	3	No opinion	5

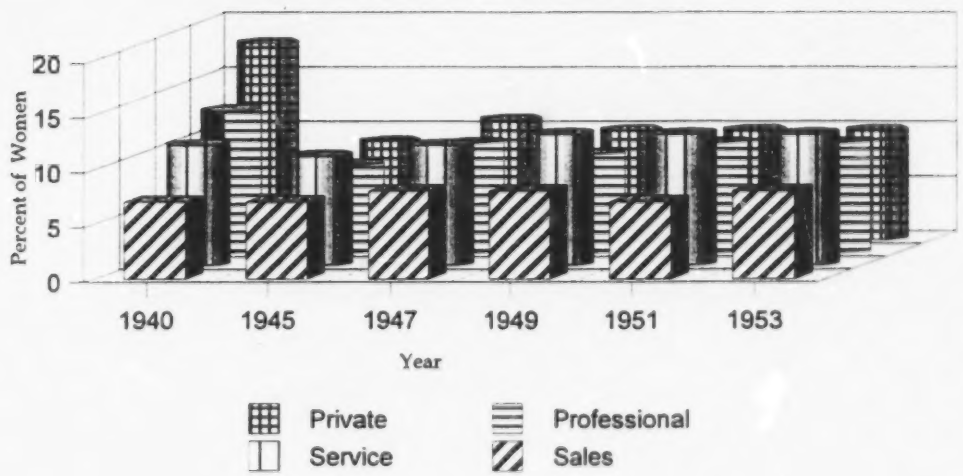
Source: C.W. Gregory, *Women in Defense Work During World War II* (N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1974), p.5.

Occupational Patterns: 1940, 1945, to 1953



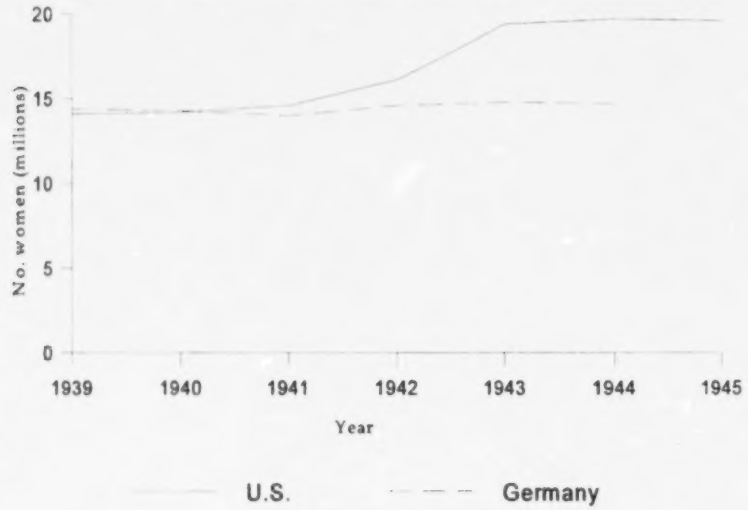
Adapted From: Women as Workers . . . a Statistical Guide.
U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Women's Bureau, n.d.

Occupational Patterns: 1940, 1945 to 1953



Adapted From: *Women as Workers...a Statistical Guide.* U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Women's Bureau, n.d.

Graph I- The Female Labor Force of Germany and the U.S. 1939-1945

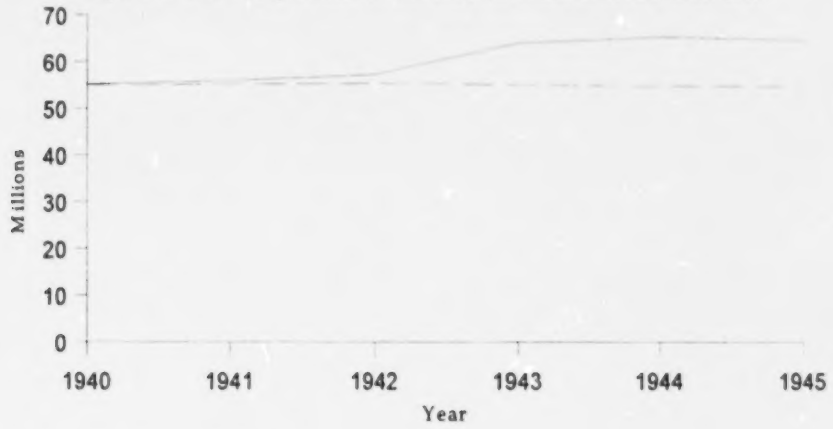


Adapted From: Lelia J. Rupp, Mobilizing Women for War
Princeton , N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 76.

Graph II- The Composition of the German Labor Force, 1939-1944

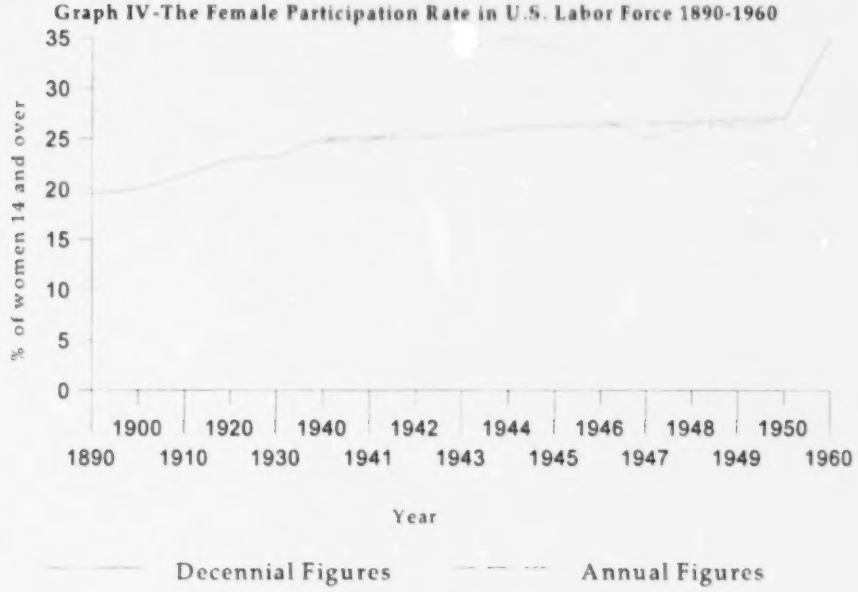
Adapted From: Lelia J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pg. 77, 79.

Graph III- The Composition of the American Labor Force , 1940-1945



Adapted From: Lelia J. Rupp, Mobilizing Women for War
Princeton , N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 77,79.

Graph IV-The Female Participation Rate in U.S. Labor Force 1890-1960



Adapted From: Lelia J. Rupp, *Mobilizing Women for War* (Princeton, N.Y.: Princeton University Press, 1978), pg. 77, 79.

CONDITIONS THAT MILITATED FOR AND AGAINST GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SOVIET COMBAT FORCES

DRAMATIC MOMENT

The "Night Witches" Fly Combat Missions

. . . On one airfield where we were stationed there were two regiments, one female and one male. We had the same missions, the same aircraft, and the same targets, so we worked together. The female regiment performed better and made more combat flights each night than the male regiment. The male pilots before a flight started smoking and talking, but the women even had supper in the cockpit of their aircraft. Once one of the German prisoners said, "When the women started bombing our trenches we [Germans] had a number of radio nets, and the radio stations on this line warned all their troops, 'Attention, attention, the ladies are in the air, stay at your shelter.'"

Nobody knows the exact date when they started calling us night witches. We were fighting in the Caucasus near the city of Mozdok; on one side of this city were Soviet troops and on the other, German. We were bombing the German positions nearly every night, and none of us was ever shot down, so the Germans began saying these are night witches, because it seemed impossible to kill us or shoot us down. . .

I could go on talking about it because we had been fighting for one thousand nights — one thousand nights in combat. Every day the girls became more courageous. To fly a combat mission is not a trip under the moon. Every attack, every bombing is a dance with death. In spite of this, every girl knew the danger, and none ever refused to fly her mission or used a pretext to avoid participating in the bombing. Our feelings were that we were doing a simple job, just a job to save our country, to liberate it from the enemy. . . .

From interview with Senior Lieutenant Serafima Amosova-Taranenko, quoted in Anne Noggle, *A Dance with Death: Soviet Airwomen in World War II* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A & M University Press, 1994), 44-47.

A. OBJECTIVES

1. To define and discuss the nature of gender equality and to identify circumstances that worked for and against it among Soviet combat forces.

2. To analyze in what ways ideas about "women's nature" and "women's place" affected Soviet women in combat.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

Sample discussion questions and activities for "Fighting the Enemy" and "Flying in Combat:"

1. How would you define gender equality for those serving in an air force in wartime? (Students may be asked to list their own ideas or come up with ideas in small groups. Or, a whole-class list may be put on the blackboard.)

2. Having read the accounts of the women serving in both an all-female and mixed-gender regiment, list all the things you can find suggesting that men and women were equal and all those suggesting that they were not. How does this list compare with items listed as defining gender equality? (Assign individual, group, or all-class work.)

3. Did having an all-female regiment constitute inequality? Why or why not? Would an all-black or all-Jewish regiment constitute inequality? Why or why not?

4. Did the women in the readings consider themselves to be men's equals or not? Explain.

5. What recourse did Lisikova have against the general? What recourse would an American woman serving in the Air Force have in comparable circumstances?

6. Underline all those statements in the women's accounts in this section that in your view a man would not have made in the same or similar circumstances. (For example, would men discuss whether looking attractive was, or was not, unpatriotic?) Discuss in what ways your responses may reflect stereotypical views of feminine characteristics.

7. Circle those statements that, if read without knowledge of the author of the document, would likely be assumed to be about a man. Discuss in what ways your responses may reflect stereotypical views of masculine characteristics.

8. Assess ways in which these accounts confirm or run counter to traditional ideas about women's "nature" and "proper role."

Sample summary exercise that may serve as oral or written assessment:

Debate the claim that "women should not serve in combat," taking into account all the pros and cons you can think of. What support for either side of this debate can be found in the study of this unit?

"Night Witches"
Women in Combat in the Soviet Union

Marxist ideology considers women and men to be equals in all rights and responsibilities. In the Soviet Union such equality was not consistently translated into reality, but the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 did open new opportunities to women, including active service in the military. Women were allowed to enlist, but leaders generally discouraged them from playing any other than traditional womanly support roles.

Women, however, increasingly took a part in civilian aviation. By 1941, when Germany invaded Russia, they made up nearly a third of all pilots trained in the U.S.S.R. It was then that Marina Raskova, who had established a women's world flying record, became the first woman honored as a Hero of the Soviet Union. Trained at the Soviet military staff college, she persuaded Stalin to let her form all-female combat regiments. Not all women who served in the Soviet Air Force were members of all-female regiments. Some served alongside men.

In both cases, women flyers had the same instruction, equipment, and assignments as men. They also had the same coverage in official histories as male air regiments did. By war's end, they accounted for over 12 percent of Soviet fighter aviation strength. They were so effective that one of their units came to be referred to by the enemy as the "night witches."

Altogether, about eight hundred thousand women served with the Soviet military. Another two hundred thousand of them were partisans in German-occupied areas. Overall about 8 percent of all Soviet forces were female, most of them serving in support rather than combat roles. In addition to women serving in male combat units, all-female units included fighter aircraft, bomber, and infantry regiments. German soldiers were shocked to meet these women on the battlefield.

A WOMAN IN COMBAT

Yevgeniya Zhigulenko was a Cossack girl who rode horses as a child, joined a glider club in her teens, and wanted to be an actress. (She became a film maker in Moscow after the war and had a small part in one of her own movies.) At the outbreak of war, she was a music student at the Moscow Conservatory and still doing night flying in glider school. During the war, she joined an all-female flying regiment, became a pilot, senior lieutenant, commander of the formation, and a Hero of the Soviet Union.

The story of her combat experiences is part of an interview with her some fifty years after the events she describes.

Flying in Combat for the Children's Sake

In the regiment we had a shortage of pilots, and so navigators were retrained to become pilots and ground personnel to become navigators. My advantage was that I already knew how to fly, so I became a pilot. By the end of the war I had a greater number of combat hours than most of the air crews. I managed to outstrip them because I have very long legs! There was an order in the regiment that the first pilot to get into the cockpit and start the engine was to be the first to take off; I was always the first because I ran faster!

We all volunteered to go to the front and strove to fulfill the most combat missions, even beyond our physical capacity. We longed to see the end of that horrible war, to liberate our fair motherland. We, young girls of the flying regiments, did our best to contribute to the defeat of the enemy and victory for our suffering people.
But life remains life, and we, as military pilots, still remained young girls. We dreamed of our grooms, marriages, children, and a future happy, peaceful life. We thought to meet our future mates at the front. But our 46th regiment was unique, for it was purely female. There wasn't

even a shabby male mechanic to rest a glance on. Nevertheless, after a night of combat we never forgot to curl our hair. Some girls thought it unpatriotic to look attractive. I argued that we should. . . .

The Soviet army began advancing into the Crimean Peninsula. Our mission was to keep enemy bombers from taking off from their airfield by bombing the airstrip every few minutes. My assignment was to map a course for the regiment and to drop firebombs, which produced a series of small fires indicating the location of their airdrome for the other crews to follow. In order not to lose our orientation, we had to flare the area. The instant the flare lit the area, we were over their cement landing strip. My navigator then suggested that we fly on five kilometers to the fascist weapon storage area and bomb it.

We dropped bombs and set the building on fire. For the next several seconds the silence was frightening, because I knew very well the enemy would react and smash us to pieces. I was all nerves and fear, and my teeth clenched. Then the guns all fired along with searchlights. I smelled gas in the cockpit — the fuel line was hit! When I saw the storage building flaming above me and the moon below me, I knew we had entered a stall. I recovered instinctively. The plane was shaking, losing flying speed and altitude. I headed toward the waters of the strait, and I remembered that there was an auxiliary field somewhere in the hills.

I called to my navigator to give me directions, but there was no reaction. I turned in my seat and to my horror found no navigator. I began sweating at the thought that I had lost my navigator while we were stalling upside down. I could not stand that thought — I had no right to come back to the regiment without her. The altitude of the aircraft was dropping down and down; then the altimeter showed no height at all.

I found myself whispering to my mama to help me. Ahead of me were the banks of the strait. I felt the wheels sliding on the water; then they hit and stuck in the sand. I had made it just to the water's edge. Then I heard my navigator's voice. "What the hell!" I was crazy with relief and happiness. I turned and leaned over her; she was stuck in the cockpit with one leg pierced through the cabin floor. She was alive, she was safe!

While we were stalling, her seat had fallen to the bottom of the cabin, and her leg had stuck into the broken floor. When she took off her helmet, I saw a huge bump on her forehead; she had hurt her head when we crashed. The infantrymen were running to our wrecked plane. She, who had miraculously escaped death, was now grieving over her forehead because she wanted to look attractive! Life took over from the war — we all wanted to love and be loved. She cried with dismay, "Look how many grooms are around, and who is going to marry me with this huge bump on my forehead?" I burst out laughing, but it was a hysterical laughter. Thus I relieved myself of that intensity of fear and tension.

Many of our crews were killed in the war, and we had to cope with this as best we could. The way I felt then was that I wanted the old times of my happy youth to return, and I idealistically visualized it. But at the bottom of my heart the feelings were more complex and complete. Seeing and hearing those massacred or herded into concentration camps as slave labor intensified and hardened our will and desire for revenge.

All my life I've been living with a vision that has become the main theme in both my feature films: a small boy, helpless and desperate in his misfortune. He is not a fruit of my fantasy — he is a real person. In my films he is a symbol of the great Russian tragedy of the millions of homeless, orphaned children.

I met this child on one of my missions. We were flying back to our regiment at dawn, and in the outskirts of a Belorussian village I saw something very tiny, a black spot — but it was something alive. When we landed I saw a small boy all alone in the deserted village. My first impulse was to give him all the rations each pilot carries in her emergency sack: candies, a bar of chocolate, sugared milk. I grabbed it from the cabin and flew to the child, spreading my arms like wings, hoping to see a smile on the face of that tiny creature whom I could make happy for at least a few moments. But in front of me was a skinny, frozen face with enormous green eyes. And in them no glimpse of joy. "Aunty, are you going to the front?" he asked me, and in his voice was a weak hope. "My daddy is at the front. Find him, please. My mama is dying there in the trench. If you find him, she won't die. . . ."

So you see, we couldn't help flying in combat, and we did our best for those tiny human beings so they would never have to suffer anymore — it was a genuine truth of heart.

From interview with Yevgeniya Zhigulenko, quoted in Anne Noggle, *A Dance with Death: Soviet Airwomen in World War II* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A & M University, 1994), 53-54, 57-58.

Fighting the Enemy at the Front, and Prejudice at Home

Olga Lisikova was competent and daring from an early age. When she was eight, her father sent her alone on a trip of some one hundred kilometers across the virgin pine-forests of the Russian Far East to bring her brother home from another village. In high school, on a dare, she spent a whole night alone in a cemetery and, on another occasion, in a cellar full of rats. She went to flying school and co-piloted Red Cross aircraft. When Germany invaded Russia, she was drafted to the front immediately. During the war, she became an aircraft commander and flew for the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army.

Her account begins with recollection of a moment of great anxiety. In spite of the fact that she was carrying badly wounded men in an aircraft clearly marked as Red Cross, a German fighter plane was attacking her. She told her story to an interviewer a half-century or so after those events.

Fighting the Enemy at the Front

The enemy fighter approached. I didn't want to die. A painful feeling seized my heart: a mixture of grief, misfortune, and anger for my own helplessness.

Now my brain worked clearly; not far ahead I saw a precipice and the thin thread of a rivulet — a tiny hope for survival. I dove at the moment the fascist fighter pulled the trigger, and then he flew past me. I saw explosions in the air, but I was not hit. I dropped between the riverbanks, very low, close to the water. Now the thought of death didn't seem so bitter — it was mixed with triumph. I knew he had lost me, and he would need to gain altitude to look for me. He would be furious — the fighter plane not being able to cope with a small flying bug. The river narrowed; the banks closed in on the plane. My hands numbed, so hard did I grip the control stick. I didn't have the nerve to look back, but intuition told me he was somewhere very close. Suddenly the river abruptly turned to the right. I made a sharp turn, and at that instant the aircraft shook

very hard; the enemy machine gun had hit my tail. . . . The commander and other pilots watched the Messerschmitt firing at something, but they did not see my aircraft. When I landed they understood what had happened. My plane was shot through in many places, but none of us was hurt. They told me what had happened to the enemy fighter: when he dove on my tail that last time, he came too low to the ground and crashed into the riverbank. The pilots congratulated me for my victory over the fascist fighter, and the commander of the 14th awarded me the Order of the Red Banner. . . .

In a month I was appointed commander of the aircraft. But a few days later I was ordered to fly to Siberia to be assigned as a copilot ferrying aircraft from America. It turned out that the commander of my division learned that I, a woman, was flying in his division, and he was determined to get rid of me. But then he was ordered to another command, and my chief rescinded the order. . . .

We were transferred to a division of the long-distance flights closer to the front. After this redeployment, the commanding staff of the division invited me to a division dinner with their major-general at the head of table. As the dinner came to an end, I noticed that the general's staff were quietly sneaking out of the room. I tried to follow their example, but I was stopped by the commander of the division. I understood that the general wanted to bed me down. Yes, I was only a lieutenant, but apart from that I was Olga Lisikova, and it was impossible to bed me down. His pressure was persistent. I had to think very fast, because he was in all respects stronger than me, and I knew well that nobody would dare to come to my rescue. In desperation I said, "I fly with my husband in my crew!" And he was taken aback. He didn't expect to hear that. He released me; I immediately rushed out and found the radio operator and mechanic of my crew. I didn't make explanations. I, as commander of the crew, ordered that one of them was to be my fictitious husband and gave them my word of honor that nobody would ever learn the truth! Then I released them.

I couldn't sleep all night; I couldn't believe any commander would behave like that. I thought, Were generals allowed to do anything that came to mind? I couldn't justify his behavior. The only explanation that seemed appropriate was that I was really very attractive in my youth. Thank God we flew away early the next morning.

I already had 120 combat missions when our division began receiving the C-47 aircraft. It was a most sophisticated plane, beyond any expectations. We pilots didn't even have to master it — it was perfect and flew itself! Before I was assigned a mission in it, I made one check flight. My next flight was a combat mission, to drop paratroopers to liberate Kiev. Later, when Kiev had been liberated, I flew there again. There were few planes on the landing strip, and in the distance I saw an aircraft of unusual shape, like a cigar. I realized at once that it was an American B-29. I taxied and parked next to it. My radio operator, tail-gunner, and I were invited aboard by the American crew. We spoke different languages, but my mechanic knew German and an American spoke it also; thus, the communication took place.

The outside of the aircraft was no surprise, but when you got into it, touched it, and saw the most sophisticated equipment, you realized that it was the most perfect aircraft design. The Americans received us very warmly. The news that we flew the American C-47 made them respect us more. The most astonishing news for them was that I, a woman, was commander of the plane. They couldn't believe it. It was an instant reaction — I suggested that I would fly them in my plane to prove it! I put the crew in the navigator compartment and placed the copilot in the right seat beside me. The flight was short, six or seven minutes, but it was hilarious. After that I was strictly reprimanded by my commander.

By the time I had made 200 combat missions, I was entrusted at last to fly in the Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Red Army. . . .

In another episode I was assigned a mission to fly to the enemy rear and drop supplies to the partisans. I crossed the front line at 4,000 meters, and at the appointed place began a dive. The altimeter showed me to be lower and lower, but I could see nothing through the clouds. Finally the altitude read zero and then less than that. Judging by the meter I was to be deep in the soil, but still I held the dive. I couldn't return to base without completing my mission: I didn't want to be reproached after the flight that I hadn't fulfilled the risky mission only because I was a coward, because I was a woman. Then I glimpsed the ground, and below me was the target where we were to drop the cargo. The area was covered with dense, patchy fog. We dropped the supplies to the partisans and returned to base.

When we arrived we learned that all the crews had turned back, not having managed to fulfill the mission. Everyone was astonished. How could I, a woman, do what other male pilots hadn't managed to accomplish? The division commander said he would promote me to be awarded the Gold Star of Hero of the Soviet Union, but I never received that award, because my crew consisted of males. If the crew had been female, it would have been awarded.

I flew with that division almost the whole war and completed 280 combat missions, but I was never awarded a single order. Although I was promoted for awards, it was always denied. The deputy commander of the division staff told me that it was totally his fault and responsibility that I had never been given an order. He had decided that I might get a swelled head in the purely male division if I had been given a high award. Instead, he thought it quite healthy for stories about me to be published in the press. Twenty years later, when I met him at the reunion of our division, I saw that his breast was pinned with high awards. I told him that during the whole war I had made more than 280 combat flights as commander of the aircraft, while he had all the traces of distinction on his body although he hadn't made a single combat flight.

From Anne Noggle, *A Dance with Death: Soviet Airwomen in World War II* (College Station, Tex.: Texas A & M University Press, 1994), 238, 242-245.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL CONTEXT IN WOMEN'S ATTITUDES ABOUT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR: CHINA AS A CASE STUDY

DRAMATIC MOMENT

It Is Not Reasonable for the Japanese to Take Land That Is Not Theirs

My son and my granddaughter Su Teh talked of the Japanese and of the power they were gaining and their desire to take over more of China each year. It is not reasonable for the Japanese to take land that is not theirs. It is not the way of those who understand. It is the way of robbers and of such as should be removed from among mankind. Surely, I said, they will not come into China, into a country that is not theirs, and take what is not theirs. But my son and my granddaughter said that they would come and make us much trouble. Su Teh said that we should think of what we should do when they came, if they came. She said that she would not stay in Peiping if the Japanese became masters. She and many of her friends had decided to leave Peiping if the Japanese came, and go somewhere to work for our country. That was new talk which I did not understand, but my granddaughter is a good girl. Why should she leave this good job to go where people do not know her and where there are none of her own people?

My son read the paper to me each evening. I began to see what Su Teh was talking about. The paper told each day of the Japanese. My son said that each day they came closer and that each day they took more of that which belonged to China. The feeling these actions of the Japanese gave me was like the feeling on board ship — the fear and the uncertainty.

Source: Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman.* From the story told by Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai. (Stanford, Ca: Stanford University Press, 1967), 241-249.

A. OBJECTIVES

1. To analyze the impact of class, education, age, and marital status on Chinese women's attitude to, and participation in, World War II.

2. To assess the ways that traditional ideas about women's "nature" and "proper role" influenced Chinese women's war experience.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

Sample discussion questions and activities for "My Granddaughter Says We Must Resist"

1. After students read Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai's account, ask half the class to brainstorm all the adjectives they can think of that would describe her accurately. Students should be prepared to give evidence from the text to back up their inference. Ask the other half of the class to brainstorm adjectives that would describe women according to traditional ideas. Share the lists and consider the degree of overlap. To what extent did Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai's beliefs and actions fit traditional feminine stereotypes?

2. Which of Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai's characteristics did not fit Su Teh, her granddaughter? What characteristics can be inferred about Su Teh that would not fit her grandmother? How would you account for the difference (for example, education, class, age, generation, contact with others outside the home and family)?

3. What significant effects did the war have on the various members of the Ning family? What significant participation in the war on their part can you identify?

4. Given her age and family circumstances, what choices other than the one she made might have been open to Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai as the Japanese invaders closed in? What would have been the probable outcomes of different choices?

Sample summary exercise that may serve as oral or written assessment:

Compare Frau Hafenkamp's attitudes toward the Nazis with Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai's views of the Japanese. What are the similarities and differ ences in their attitudes and circumstances? Do the differences in circumstances account for the differences in attitudes (for example, presence of a husband with political views, legitimate government as opposed to invader, younger age, Christian as opposed to Confucian ideology)?

Sample discussion questions and activities for "We Lived Off Ransoms:"

1. In what ways did gender, education, and marriage influence Jin Shuyu's war experience and participation?

2. Compare Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai to Jin Shuyu in terms of attitudes to, experience of, and participation in the war. What circumstances do you think explain the differences?

3. What war-related moral dilemmas can you identify in this reading? Is your attitude towards these dilemmas the same as that of Jin Shuyu? Why or why not?

Sample summary exercise that may serve as oral or written assessment:

Find out about the war experience and participation of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. Explain in what ways her experience was similar to that of Jin Shuyu. To Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai? To what extent might similarity of circumstances help explain similarity of participation and experience?

Women and the Resistance to Japanese Occupation in China

It was 1937. The Japanese had just invaded China, and the peasant women of Yenan (where the one hundred thousand Chinese Communists who survived the Long March settled) looked with stern disapproval at the "big coolie feet" of the urban and southern women among the new arrivals. This remote northwestern region was very traditional, and conservative. Most women still had bound feet. Unsurprisingly, only about 5 percent of them took part in agricultural work, compared to the 30 percent or so in the southeast where the Communists had earlier been entrenched while resisting Nationalist attacks.

All attempts to mobilize women for the war effort against the Japanese had to take tradition into account. The Communists' greatest success was helping Yenan women increase their household production in spinning, weaving, and sewing to make clothes for the troops. The Communists taught women with unbound feet to do agricultural work, and they made sporadic efforts to teach women about Communism, which in theory at least, embraced gender equality. By war's end, some 15 percent of the Party membership was female. Initially, women were encouraged to vote, and some were elected representatives. In fact, one or two of every five leaders of each soviet (council) had to be a woman. The Party spoke out for women's rights in the minimal ways that were possible without alienating the poor peasant men who were the Communists' strongest supporters.

By 1943, however, the Party became reluctant to work against child betrothals, forced marriage, lack of access to divorce, or wife-beating, though they did come out strongly against foot-binding. The Central Committee, on which only one woman served, even stated that women were not to be called to any mass meetings. Men opposed new-fangled ideas about women. They complained that it was improper, even immoral, for women to spend time outside their own family courtyard and that any additional work, war or no war, interfered with women's cooking and other domestic chores. Mothers and mothers-in-law, the older women

who had to take up the slack if war production cut into women's household work, also protested loudly.

Gradually though, Party pressure and increased income from women's war work (paid to the man of the house) overcame much of the opposition. Women's home cloth production in Communist-held areas tripled, and some women even entered industrial work. These changes had the ripple effects of increased respect for women earners in families, as well as new economic opportunities and increased self-confidence for some.

Some women served in the Communist Army that, by 1945, numbered almost a million regular troops. Another two million local auxiliary forces and militias were called up at need from able-bodied males aged fifteen to fifty and served in support capacities. Numbers were even larger if one includes the guerrilla fighters, who were often part-time bandits.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek, the American-educated wife of the Nationalist leader, was an Honorary Commander of the Chinese Air Force, one branch of the generally inept, corrupt, and passive Nationalist armed forces, which numbered altogether just over a million. Among the Nationalists, there was no question of women's equality. Female contribution to the war effort was to bear children, write letters to the troops, roll bandages, nurse and comfort soldiers, and, on a small scale, do industrial work.

The Japanese generally did not distinguish between male and female resisters, between the civilian population and guerrillas. Their preferred policy was "three-all campaigns:" kill all, burn all, loot all.

"My Granddaughter Says We Must Resist. But What Can We Do?"

Ning Lao T'ai-t'ai (Old Mistress Ning) came from a well-to-do family that fell on hard times early in her childhood. At age fifteen, she was married to a man twice her age. He turned out to be an opium addict, spending all they had on the drug, then selling one of their daughters to feed his habit. She worked hard to support herself and her daughter by begging, peddling, and going into service as a maid. She raised a daughter and a son, arranged their marriages, and helped them throughout their lives. The following document is part of her autobiography as told to an American woman at the time of the Japanese invasion of China, when Ning was in her seventies.

"The War Came Nearer"

The war came nearer. I remembered what my son had read about a little country where the people are all black and have no big guns. And every day the airplanes from a country in Europe went over and dropped bombs on them. The Japanese have come nearer each month and they are more arrogant each day. They ride in big motor cars and, my son says, the decisions made in the city are their decisions.

One year was like the next, except that the children were promoted from one grade to another, and, my son said, the Japanese came closer, taking each year more of the land belonging to China. For people living as we did, there was not much difference. It was only in the talk of my son and my granddaughter that I knew of any difference — and things became more expensive to buy.

Then one day we gave my son his breakfast as usual. It was summer and we had daylight to cook his breakfast. He started to work, but before we could get the breakfast things cleared away he was back again. He said that our soldiers would not let him cross the main street, so he could not get to work. He said the streets were empty, as in the middle of the night, and the soldiers stood guard with long bayonets. We stayed inside our gate and all the people went into their houses and shut their gates. When soldiers fight that is all the people can do. The city was quiet; never have I heard the city so quiet.

Every morning my son went to see if he could cross the main street, and on the third day the soldiers let him cross. They let us cross between sunrise and sunset, and those that brought vegetables from the truck gardens outside the city came again, and we had food to eat.

Then the guns began to roar. They roared all day and all night. There was fighting, they said, in the south of the city, in the South Barracks. The stories of the fighting were thick like snow in the winter. We gathered in the side streets in knots and told each other what we heard, and we were afraid.

We were proud of our people. They told of one boy outside the Anting Gate. He had a bloody sword. He had killed eight Japanese with his sword. It was dripping with blood. He waved it over his head and sang a song from the romance of the Three Kingdoms, and fell dead. He was a brave boy. Our men are each equal to eight Japanese. But the Japanese have guns and airplanes and we have only swords. . . .

The Japanese came. My son said they marched into the city through the South Gate as the Chinese soldiers marched out through the West and Northwest Gates. They took over the yamen and the barracks. The Japanese became masters of the city as the Manchus did before and as the Mongols did many hundreds of years before that. . . .

The little wars do not count. There are always little wars on the borders of the land. But now, my son and my granddaughter say, there is a big war in the land and there is trouble for us all.

Perhaps it is a new dynasty come to rule us, but Su Teh does not agree. She says that we must fight, that we must not give in to the Japanese. How can we fight? I do not understand such matters. . . .

Perhaps the Mandate of Heaven has passed to the Japanese. . . . If the Japanese have the Mandate of Heaven. . . . we should listen to them as our new masters.

My granddaughter says no. She says we must resist and not have any masters. She says that the land must be governed by the people of the land. She says that a new China is being born. I do

not understand such words. That is new talk. How can people govern a land? Always there has been a Son of Heaven who is the father and mother of the people. If he is a bad father and mother, the Mandate of Heaven passes from him and a new emperor comes, one whom Heaven has chosen.

My granddaughter helps her friends in the hospital get supplies to the guerrillas in the hills. She will not tell me about it. She says it is dangerous for me to know. Every day we hear the guns roaring outside the city. Every day we hear the bombs falling and bursting on the hills where the guerrillas have their camps. They tell us that the old temples where the guerrillas stay are being destroyed by the bombs. My granddaughter says that the guerrillas move on to another temple or village, that the Japanese bomb the rocks in the hills and waste their ammunition. But the Japanese must sometimes bomb people also or why should the guerrillas need medical supplies?

My granddaughter tells me that a new China is building, that the guerrillas will work with the people and win the war. I don't know. It seems better to me that we should not have war and destruction. Our ancestors changed their dress for the Manchu invaders but did not change themselves. We are Chinese and will always be Chinese. They cannot change us. But if we are dead we are dead.

I tell my son to do his work. That is what we Chinese have always done. We work for our families and we live.

Su Teh is planning to go to Free China. I tell her it is dangerous to go through the Japanese lines. I am afraid. She says that she is afraid also but that she must go.
What can we do? The children, my grandchildren, the boys and the girl, are too young to make a march or to suffer the hardships of a journey. Who are there in other provinces who know us, who will give work to my son to feed the mouths of these children? My daughter is too fat and weak to make the journey. We will stay here and win through if the fates are with us. If the fates are not with us we will perish together, the whole family. If we live, we live, and that is good for China also. . . .

Every day the guns roar. My granddaughter tells me we will have no peace until the Japanese are driven from the land. I tell her that we will live here, my son and his wife and the children and my daughter also. We will live here as long as there is work for my son. His master is good and his work is such that all men need it whether they be Chinese or Japanese. We can manage somehow to live. The schools are better here. If there is no work we will, one family, die together. I do not believe in families separating. . . .

My granddaughter came to say good-by. She brought us the things she had in her rooms. She said it would be many years before she would need them again. She told us that she had put her savings in the hands of my son to be used for her mother and for us. She said that she would send us money if she could. Truly she is filial. She said that one must be good to one's family, but that one must work for the country also.

She would not tell us when she was leaving or which way she would go. She said that she would wear the clothes of an amah, or those of a peasant woman, and that she would be safe. The Japanese do not stop the peasants, she said. How can Su Teh, who is an educated woman, whose hands are soft, dress like a peasant and not be found out? I am afraid for her.

I would like to go and see her off. But she says that is not possible. No one must know when and how she goes. The tears ran down her cheeks and the tears ran down my cheeks and the cheeks of my daughter, her mother.

I am afraid for my granddaughter but I am not afraid for myself. I am an old woman. What does it matter what happens to me? I am afraid for my grandchildren. But while there is life in me and in my son we will work for these children.

From Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967), 241-249 passim.

"We Lived Off Ransoms"
Bandit, Guerrila, and Housewife

Jin Shuyu's story comes from an informal interview given to two Chinese journalists in 1984, when she was sixty-seven. Though an ethnic Korean, she considered herself Han Chinese. On the testimony of her wartime colleagues, she was classified as an "Anti-Japanese Alliance Veteran." This gained her invitations to receptions and conferences, though no money. She was not considered a "hardship case" because her son was an associate professor.

"I Joined the Anti-Japanese Resistance"

I joined the Anti-Japanese Resistance when I left middle-school. It's the devil's own job getting into the army these days, but there was nothing to it then. Me and my classmates we just arranged to run away from home and head for the hills. We found the resistance and joined up. Seeing as we were girls, and educated too, they made us into nurses. But it wasn't really as cut and dried as all that; we nurses got in on the action as well. It was a real hotch-potch if ever there was one, that Anti-Japanese Army: there were some communists in it, but the main leaders weren't communists. Our commander was the master of a spear society — a martial arts teacher they'd call him nowadays. And our chief-of-staff was a village head — in class terms, an enemy. But he'd fallen out with the local officials: that's how he'd come to join. A village head then was like the secretary of a village government now, but I'm not too clear about all those old government posts. Anyway, I heard he joined the communists later, and died in action.*

We didn't fight pitched battles with the Japanese then. We blew up storehouses and truck convoys and raided shops run by traitors, all at night. Our commander was a popular man with enormous appeal, and he was no fool. But he couldn't fight and he was superstitious too — always had to consult the spirits before going into action. Of course we didn't know anything about united fronts or guerrilla tactics. The communists and nationalists were still fighting each other

south of the Great Wall. Nobody was joining forces with anybody then. We all hated that bastard Zhang Xueliang"".

What we like best was fighting the Koreans from Korea. They'd gone under a lot earlier than us,""" and they were even worse than the Japs.

It wasn't just traitors we had against us. The poor didn't like us much either: if the Japanese caught us they got it in the neck too. And we didn't know the first thing about arousing the masses or doing propaganda. We lived off ransoms. I was actually in on kidnapping the head of the chamber of commerce. We took him off to the hills, and told his family how much they'd have to pay. If the families didn't pay up we really did kill the hostages. We'd have lost face if we hadn't. But most of those rich folks were in with the Japanese, so we weren't doing anything very urong. Our commander once said my father was supporting the Japanese too, and we'd have to deal with him. I was terrified! But the chief-of-staff had his wits about him. My father was a doctor, so it didn't make sense to talk like that, he said. He'd support us if we had any wounded. Then he said we had to do right by me. How would it look if we messed my old man about? So that was the end of that. You see, we didn't play it by the book.

Come to think of it, the communists were always trying to win us over, and our commander was keen to get their advice. But I don't know if the Party was ever actually guiding us. I found out only a couple of years ago there were communists among us. But they weren't in command and didn't let on who they were then. Our commander was the only boss in those days.

A year or so later we got smashed by the Japanese and had to scatter. They came down on us so hard we had nowhere to hide, we couldn't give them the slip and the peasants didn't dare shelter us. The commander and a few others escaped to the north, and later they joined the Anti-Japanese United Army and the Communist Party. I escaped back to Andong, but my family said I was a known bandit now, so I couldn't hide there. They told me to go to Korea, and I did; I escaped to Sinuiju.
Korea was Japanese-controlled too, of course, but at any rate it wasn't the same country. So no one knew about me being a bandit and they didn't ask any questions. To begin with I went to Songjin — they call it Kimch'aek now — and I worked as a servant. I wanted to get myself

settled there. What with Korea being occupied longer than China there really was quite a "New Order" by then and they were very tough about residence permits. But seeing as I was an ethnic Korean and had lots of connections, I managed to get one in the end by greasing some palms.

Once I had proper papers I went to Seoul. The Koreans weren't very well educated in those days, so someone like me could do okay in a big city. I started by teaching middle school. It wasn't easy for a woman getting a job there then, but they certainly respected you if you had one, especially if you were a teacher. They're not like us in Korea: they really think the world of their teachers. Later on I got married. My husband owned a restaurant — not any old joint, a fine big place. He was Chinese -- Han Chinese in fact. He'd no idea I'd ever been a bandit. And anyway, once I was married and couldn't go out to work any more, my ideas changed: I stopped worrying about saving the country. I had enough to think about with the children. The bandit became an ordinary middle-class housewife. I was even mixing with Japanese.

The Japanese went berserk before they surrendered in 1945. They ransacked our restaurant, and we lost all our savings when the banks folded. We were flat broke. We had to pick ourselves up and start all over again. But he was a popular man, my husband, so with loans and gifts from everyone we managed to start up a new restaurant. It seemed so easy in those days — within a few years we were a big business again. . . .

' The North-eastern anti-Japanese Army was a resistance movement based among Koreans in what was then Japanese-occupied north-east China.
'' Warlord of the north-east from 1928 until he took refuge from the Japanese with the nationalist government in Nanjing.
''' Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910.

From Zhang Xinxin and Sang Ye, *Chinese Lives: An Oral History* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1987), 20-23.

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